

A NEW SPECIES OF VISCAINOA FROM
BAJA CALIFORNIA

HOWARD SCOTT GENTRY

In 1889 Townshend Stith Brandegee rode from La Purisima to San Ignacio along the Pacific side of Baja California. For a half century no other botanist so much as collected a plant through that long stretch of the peninsula. Physiographically it is a very striking region with a variable series of Pliocene and Pleistocene marine sediments eroded into colorful escarpments and masses which, reared out of the sea, are frowned upon by the massive volcanic cerros overtowering on the eastward. A few years ago one of the Baja California governors started an automobile road from La Purisima to San Ignacio, but abandoned the route almost as soon as the right-of-way was laid out. With a week's supply of water and provisions, a shovel, a machete, and a good moso, the road can still be driven from Purisima north as far as a broad sandy arroyo about eight miles north of San Juanico.

Though we are here primarily concerned with the arroyo locality, San Juanico is a type locality for several of Brandegee's collections and has an exceeding charm and importance all its own. Quite the place for the proverbial survivor of a shipwreck to find a temporary haven, there is a small group of date palms nurtured by a spring of clear, slightly saline water. A broad beach is less than a quarter of a mile away; upon its sands the numerous tracks of coyotes give evidence of a rich sea life along the shallow margins of the bay. An interesting horizon of calcareous badlands enfolds the place in an earthy pageantry of greens, yellows, reds, and grays. San Juanico is uninhabited and except for an occasional vaquero and a few stray cattle, only wild animals come there to drink. Vegetation is sparse.

Passing on eight miles northward, I was fortunate in encountering the 3- to 5-foliolate *Viscainoa*, which Brandegee discovered in the region and of which he wrote under the name *Viscainoa geniculata* (Kell.) Greene (Proc. Cal. Acad. Sci., Ser. 2, 2: 137. 1889). Brandegee's collection was made at San Raimundo which, judging from his map, must be very close to my locality of collection and very possibly may be the rancho now called Cadajé. Since the plant appears so distinct from all other known variants of *Viscainoa geniculata*, the following segregation is offered.

Viscainoa pinnata sp. nov. Suffrutex 2-3 m. alta, ramis minute striatis, irregulariter pubescentibus; foliis 3- ad 5-foliatis, rarisime simplicis, petiolatis, plus minusve pubescentibus vel in senectute glabris, ovato-lanceolatis, ad apicem acutis, ad basim cuneatis; floribus terminalibus, 1-5 in axillis, petalibus fulvis, filamentis 4-5 mm. longis, ad basim latis; fructus vix pubescentibus.

Shrub 2-3 m. high, 3-5 m. broad, polypodial or branching from near base; young branches green, slender, pliant, 2-10 dm. long, straight, descending, horizontal, or ascending from old grayish-brown branches; internodes 1-6 cm. long, sparsely long-pubescent, striate; nodes with dense white tomentum in axils persisting after defoliation; stipules deciduous, 4-6 mm. long, subulate, long-pubescent when young, in age subglabrous; leaves green, mostly 3-5 cm. long, 3- to 5-foliate, rarely simple, rarely with one lateral leaflet lacking; petioles mostly 10-15 mm. long, sparsely pubescent, rachis sparsely pubescent; leaflets ovate-lanceolate, acuminate-mucronate at tips, cuneate at bases, slightly pubescent to glabrous in age, finely pinnately veined from a strong mid-vein; ultimate leaflet largest, mostly 3-5 cm. long, 1.5-2 cm. wide; lateral leaflets opposite or subopposite, sessile, or with petiolules 1 mm. long, adjacent to ultimate leaflet or discrete (interval 2-5 mm.), mostly 2-3 cm. long, 8-12 mm. wide; flowers mostly terminal on branches, 1-5 in axils; pedicels pubescent, 1 cm. long, accrescent in fruit to 1.5 cm. long; sepals 4-5, caducous, densely tomentulose, oblong-orbicular (one or two deeply cupped), 8-10 mm. long, 4-7 mm. wide; petals 4-5, yellow, suborbicular, about 10 mm. long, 8-9 mm. wide; filaments 4-5 mm. long, broadened at base; anthers oblong, 2 mm. long; ovary short-stipitate, 3- to 5-celled, densely white tomentulose; pistil 3- to 4-lobed, lobes margined with fine granular tomentum; fruiting pedicels 1.5 cm. long; fruit obovoid, green, 3- to 5-celled, 2-3 cm. long, 1.2-1.5 cm. wide, slightly reticulate, relatively sparsely fine-pubescent, variably beaked.

Type. On agglomerate cliff about eight miles north of San Juanico, Baja California, where an abandoned road crosses a wide sandy arroyo, March 8, 1939, *Howard Scott Gentry 4311* (Shreve Herbarium, Carnegie Desert Laboratory, Tucson, Arizona). Isotypes are deposited in the following herbaria: Dudley Herbarium, Stanford University; University of California; Missouri Botanical Garden; Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; Instituto de Biología, Universidad de México, D. F.; Gentry Herbarium, Carnegie Desert Laboratory, Tucson, Arizona.

This first specific addition to the genus *Viscainoa* may be distinguished readily as follows:

- Leaves usually entire; petioles short, 1-10 mm. long; filaments not broadened at base, often brownish glandular for some distance above the base; plants generally cinereous, flowers pale yellow *V. geniculata*
 Leaves usually 3- to 5-foliate; petioles longer, 10-15 mm. long; filaments broadened at base, not brownish glandular; plants green; flowers bright yellow.
..... *V. pinnata*

Desert Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution,
 Tucson, Arizona,
 June, 1939.